



**CHU
Sainte-Justine**
Le centre hospitalier
universitaire mère-enfant
Université 
de Montréal

Balanitis and balanoposthitis

Information brochure for clients



This brochure supplements the information provided by the healthcare professionals at the hospital.

If you saw a doctor and they told you that your child has balanitis or if you saw a triage nurse and you know your child has symptoms of balanitis, but you had to leave the emergency room before seeing the doctor, this information may be helpful.

What is balanitis?

Balanitis is an inflammation of the glans that can occur in both circumcised and uncircumcised children. The foreskin is usually affected as well (balanoposthitis). Balanitis mainly affects preschoolers.

Causes

There are two main causes of balanitis in young children:

- ▶ Poor hygiene* (washing too much or too little)
- ▶ Irritation
- ▶ **Good hygiene:** Wash the penis with water and a mild unscented soap at bathtime. If you can easily pull back the foreskin, you can wash the glans. Don't force it—gently dilate the foreskin to see if the glans comes out. Be sure to rinse it well afterward.

Symptoms

- ▶ Pain or sensitivity
- ▶ Redness
- ▶ Swelling
- ▶ Difficulty urinating
- ▶ Purulent secretions (containing pus) may be present

Note that if there are secretions, but no sign of inflammation (redness, swelling), it's not balanitis. It's usually smegma (whitish secretions) under the child's foreskin, which is normal.

How to treat balanitis

- ▶ Maintain good local hygiene:
 - › Sitz baths (have your child sit in the bath with warm water and mild unscented soap) 2 to 3 times a day until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped.
- ▶ Don't forcefully retract the foreskin.

- ▶ Avoid irritants: scented soaps, bubble baths, talcum powder (baby powder), etc.
- ▶ Avoid excessive washing.
- ▶ Adolescents should avoid sex, spermicides, condom lubricant and so on during treatment.
- ▶ Apply antibiotic cream as needed, as discussed with your healthcare provider.

Treatment duration

With good local hygiene and frequent sitz baths, there's usually improvement within 7 days, often within the first 2 to 3 days.

How to prevent balanitis

Proper hygiene, avoiding irritants and not forcefully retracting the foreskin are the main ways to prevent the onset and recurrence of inflammation.

When to see a doctor

At the emergency room

- ▶ Significant redness that spreads to the pubic area
- ▶ Inability to urinate
- ▶ Fever
- ▶ General deterioration of health

At the clinic

- ▶ Persistent or worsening symptoms
- ▶ Recurrence or no improvement within 4 to 6 weeks of starting appropriate treatment

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